



STANDARDS AND CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT

Excerpt From Country Commercial Guide

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Japan Standards and Conformity Assessment

Standards Overview

Many domestic and imported products alike are subject to product testing and cannot be sold in Japan without certification of compliance with prescribed standards. Knowledge of, and adherence to, these standards and their testing procedures can be the key to making or breaking a sale. Product requirements in Japan fall into two categories: technical regulations (or mandatory standards) and non-mandatory voluntary standards. Compliance with regulations and standards is also governed by a certification system in which inspection results determine whether or not approval (certification/quality mark) is granted.

Approval is generally required to sell a product or even display it in a trade event; unapproved medical equipment may be displayed if accompanied by a sign indicating that the product is not yet approved for sale. To affix a mandatory quality mark or a voluntary quality mark requires prior product type approval and possibly factory inspections for quality control assessment. Regulated products must bear the appropriate mandatory mark when shipped to Japan in order to clear Japanese Customs. Regulations may apply not only to the product itself, but also to packaging, marking or labeling requirements, testing, transportation and storage, and installation. Compliance with "voluntary" standards and obtaining "voluntary" marks of approval can greatly enhance a product's sales potential and help win Japanese consumer acceptance.

There are two ongoing trends in Japan regarding standards. One is a move toward reform of such standards, and the other is a move toward bringing them into harmony with prevailing international standards. While reform is underway, a long list of laws containing mandatory standards remain on the books and most have not been translated into English. Therefore, it is important that a Japanese agent or partner be fully aware of the wide variety of legislation that could affect the sale of the exported product in Japan. Major laws stipulating standards that apply to products in Japan include the following:

- Electrical Appliance and Material Control Law
- Consumer Product Safety Law
- Gas Utility Industry Law
- Food Sanitation Law
- Pharmaceutical Affairs Law
- Road Vehicles Law
- Building Standards Law



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The Japan Industrial Standards Committee (JISC) plays a central role in standards activities in Japan (<http://www.jisc.go.jp/eng/index.html>). Its mission consists of four elements: (1) establishment and maintenance of Japan Industrial Standards (JIS), (2) administration of accreditation and certification, (3) participation in international standards activities, and (4) development of measurement standards and technical infrastructure for standardization. JISC publishes plans each month for the preparation of new and revised JIS drafts on its website: <http://www.jisc.go.jp/eng/jis-act/drafts-preparation.html>.

Existing JIS standards are reviewed and revised every 5 years. Once a new or revised draft JIS standard has been prepared, JISC posts these draft standards for a sixty-day public comment period: see <http://www.jisc.go.jp/app/pager>. The JISC website also provides information regarding how foreign entities may participate in the JIS drafting process.

The "voluntary" JIS mark, administered by the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI), applies to nearly 600 different industrial products and consists of over 8,500 standards. Adherence to JIS is also an important determinant for companies competing on bids in the Japanese government procurement process. Products that comply with these standards will be given preferential treatment in procurement decisions under Japan's Industrial Standardization Law. JIS covers all industrial products except for those products regulated by specific national laws or for which other standard systems apply (e.g., the Pharmaceutical Affairs Law and Japan Agricultural Standards).

The Japan Agricultural Standards (JAS) mark is another "voluntary" but widely used product quality and labeling mark. JAS applies to beverages, processed foods, forest products, agricultural commodities, livestock products, oils and fats, products of the fishing industry, and processed goods made from agricultural, forestry, and fishing industry raw materials. Specific JAS marks exist for various types of plywood, paneling, flooring boards, lumber, and timber. The JAS marking system is administered by Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF). Japan's Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW) administers separate mandatory standards for quality labeling of processed foods and beverages.

Conformity Assessment

The Japan Accreditation System for Product Certification Bodies of JIS Mark (JASC) is an accreditation program defined by the JIS Law, and operated by the JASC Office in METI. JASC accredits product certification bodies in the private



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sector and allows them to certify companies so that they may place the JIS Mark on their products. A list of Japanese and foreign organizations accredited by JASC as "JIS mark" certification bodies is available at the JISC website (<http://www.jisc.go.jp/eng/jis-mark/acc-insp-body.html>). This list provides contact information as well as the JIS field of certification for these testing organizations.

The two major non-governmental accreditation bodies in Japan are IAJapan (within the quasi-governmental National Institute of Technology and Evaluation) and the Japan Accreditation Board for Conformity Assessment (JAB). IAJapan operates several accreditation programs including the Japan National Laboratory Accreditation System (JNLA) and the Japan Calibration Service System (JCSS). IAJapan's website (<http://www.nite.go.jp/asse/iajapan/en/index.html>) provides lists of laboratories accredited under its programs, and laboratories accredited by JAB can be found at: http://www.jab.or.jp/cgi-bin/jab_exam_proof.cgi?page=1&eng=1.

Product Certification

A limited number of testing laboratories in the United States not listed on the websites noted above in "Conformity Assessment" have also been designated by various Japanese government agencies to test and approve U.S. products for compliance with Japanese mandatory certification systems and laws. Products not covered by these arrangements must be tested and approved by Japanese testing labs before these products can be sold in Japan.

Accreditation

Please see the "Conformity Assessment" section above.

Publication of Technical Regulations

Each Japanese ministry posts draft regulations for public comment on their respective websites. It should be noted that although U.S. entities may submit comments, the amount of time given for submissions varies widely and most postings are made only in Japanese. To assist U.S. entities that wish to participate in the Japanese regulatory process, CS Tokyo prepares a weekly summary translation of selected public comment announcements by Japanese government agencies available at: <http://www.buyusa.gov/japan/en/mac.html>. Finalized technical regulations and standards are published in Japan's national gazette known as the "kanpo" (<http://kanpou.npb.go.jp/>, Japanese only).



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Labeling and Marking

As noted above, Japanese laws requiring product certification and labeling are numerous. A good reference for information on these requirements is JETRO's Handbook for Industrial Product Import Regulations available at:

http://www.jetro.go.jp/se/e/standards_regulation/index.html.

Trade Agreements

Japan concluded an FTA with Singapore in 2002, and finalized a second FTA with Mexico in 2004. Japan is discussing possible FTA's with other nations including Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, and the Philippines. Agricultural issues, however, have hindered Japan's efforts to conclude FTA's. Japan is a member of APEC, which has established a goal of APEC-wide free trade and investment for developed economy members by 2010, and for all APEC member economies by 2020.

Web Resources

Japanese import clearance and customs procedures:

Japanese Ministry of Finance

http://www.customs.go.jp/index_e.htm

Japanese Customs:

Japanese Ministry of Finance

<http://www.mof.go.jp/english/tariff/tariff.htm>

Customs Counselors System in Japan

http://www.customs.go.jp/zeikan/seido/index_e.htm

Japan Tariff Association

<http://www.kanzei.or.jp/english/>

APEC Tariff Database

<http://www.apectariff.org/>

U.S. export control procedures:

U.S. Department of Commerce

Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS)

<http://www.bis.doc.gov/>

(for defense-related articles)

U.S. Department of State

Office of Defense Trade Controls

<http://www.pmdtc.org/>

(for current U.S. embargo information)

U.S. Department of the Treasury

Office of Foreign Assets Control

<http://www.treas.gov/offices/enforcement/ofac/>

Obtaining a temporary-entry *carnet*:



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United States Council for International Business

Local Offices — <http://www.uscib.org/>

N.Y. Office — info@uscib.org

<http://www.atacarnet.com/>

Standards:

Japan Industrial Standards Committee (JISC)

<http://www.jisc.go.jp/eng/index.html>

International Accreditation Japan (IAJapan)

<http://www.nite.go.jp/asse/iajapan/en/index.html>

Japan Accreditation Board for Conformity Assessment (JAB)

http://www.jab.or.jp/cgi-bin/jab_exam_proof.cgi?page=1&eng=1

Japanese government regulations:

(for public comment updates)

U.S. Commercial Service

American Embassy Tokyo

<http://www.buyusa.gov/japan/en/mac.html>.

(for finalized technical regulations and standards)

Japan National Gazette ("Kanpo")

<http://kanpou.npb.go.jp/> (Japanese only)

Labeling and marking requirements:

Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO)

http://www.jetro.go.jp/se/e/standards_regulation/index.html